

# Graves at sites 3-J-26, 3-J-28 and 3-J-29

## Site 3-J-26

This site was surveyed during the 1999 season (see Welsby 2003, 16, fig. 2.12; Usai 2003, 83-85). In 2002/3 it was more extensively studied with the collection of many artefacts<sup>1</sup> the excavation of sondages<sup>2</sup> and the excavation of the only upstanding feature, a stone tumulus (Plate 1).

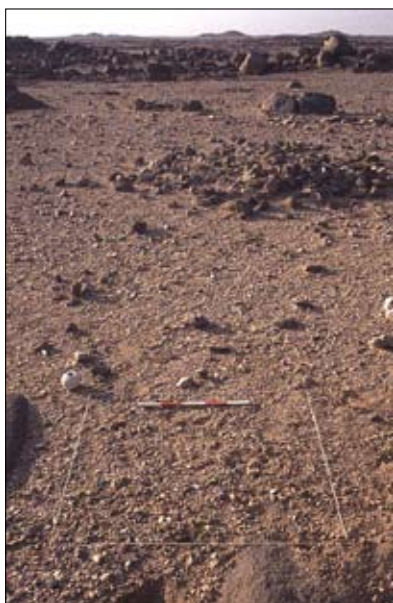


Plate 1. Site 3-J-26. View across the site with the tumulus in the middle distance, looking south west.

Grave 20 [skeleton 21, Grave cut L: 1.77m, W: 1.7mm, Depth: c. 300mm]

The grave cut certainly post-dated some of the features noted above and may be later in date than them all. At the surface it was sub-rectangular in shape, approximately 1.77 x 1.7m in size (Figure 2) which was reduced to 1.3 x 1m at a lower level towards the east side of the grave cut (Figure 3). Within this were large blocks of stone some of which rested directly on the skeleton. The skeleton of



Plate 2. Site 3-J-26. Grave 20, skeleton 21.

an adult female was tightly flexed and, aligned south to north, with the head to the south facing east (Figure 1, Plate 2). The hands were in front of the face. The upper part of the body has been twisted so that the posterior scapula and sacrum were on top while the pubis faces towards the bottom of the grave. There had been some disturbance of the body with some of the long bones, which had been snapped, placed by the pelvis. Traces of a red colouration near the pelvis and legs are presumably the remains of a leather hide on which the body was laid. Beads were found in the area. Blue glass and glazed composition beads (SF:1554, 1557) were found at the neck. Other finds included a bone pin (SF:497) and five animal vertebrae, the latter placed by the head.



Figure 1. Site 3-J-26. Grave 20, skeleton 21 (scale 1:15).

The tumulus was circular, c. 3m in diameter and a maximum of 300mm in height, a mass of small to medium-sized rounded granite blocks.

### *The finds*

SF:

beads, 347, glazed composition 1554, glass 1557  
pin, bone 497

**Pottery forms:**

<sup>1</sup> See the report by P. Osypiński, pg. 000.

<sup>2</sup> See the report by D. Welsby, pg. 000 based entirely on the work conducted in the field by P. Osypiński.

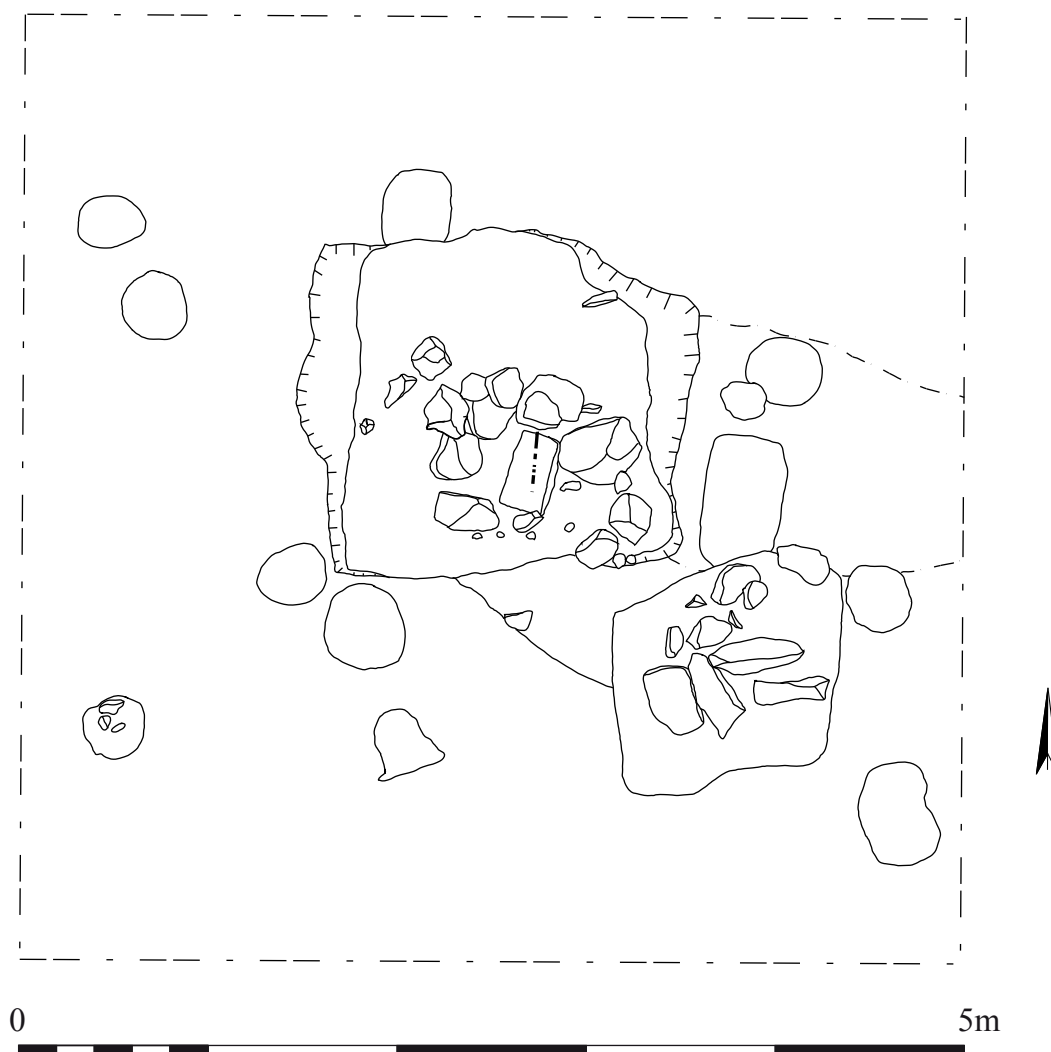


Figure 2. Site 3-J-26. Grave 20 and the post-holes and pits in its vicinity (scale 1:40).



Figure 3. Site 3-J-26. Grave 20, stone covering immediately above the body (scale 1:40).

## Site 3-J-28

The more southerly of the two tumuli was excavated.

Grave (1)4 [skeleton (1)6, Grave cut L: 1.4m, W: 1m, Depth: 260mm]

The grave cut is very roughly sub-rectangular and has steep sides utilising natural fissures in the bedrock which rises to the surface in this area (Figure 4). The grave pit is very shallow with the skeleton barely below the level of the surrounding ground surface (Figure 5, Plate 5). The earth fill contains small stones and some large stones covering the head and thorax region. The body is laid on its right side, aligned south west – north east with the head to the south west facing south east. The right hand is in

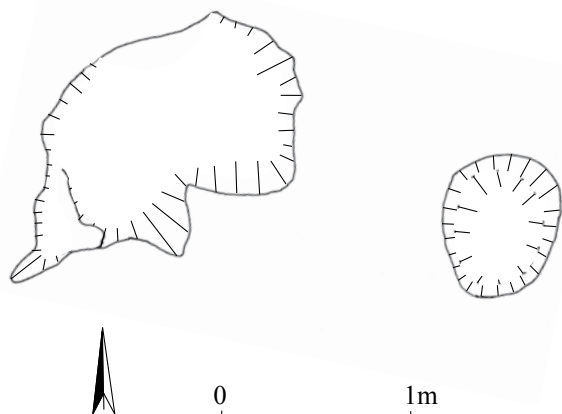


Figure 4. Site 3-J-28. Grave (1)4 and pit (1)9 (scale 1:40).

front of the face, the left is on the pelvis. Still *in situ* on the bones of the left hand are four bone finger rings (SF:323-325) (Plate 3), one glazed composition bead (SF:329) and 17 carnelian beads (SF:327-328) were found at the neck. By the right side of the skull was a shell hairslide/earring

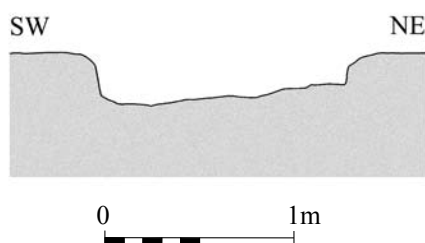


Figure 5. Site 3-J-28. Grave 4, SW-NE section (scale 1:40).

(SF:330). There were possible traces of organic material, perhaps basketry of leather, by the lower sternum.

Approximately 1m to the west of the grave was an oval steep-sided pit, 800 x 600mm in size and 230mm deep (Figure 7, Plate 5). Set within the fill was a pot ..... There is no direct stratigraphical link between this pit and the grave.

The tumulus sealed both the grave cut and the small pit. It was circular, 4.4m in diameter and approximately 1m in height. It was constructed of medium-sized rounded granite blocks (average 350 x 250 x 150mm) with the larger stones tending to be towards the base and forming a rough kerb above which the stones were piled. The tumulus rises to a point at the top. In the earth among the

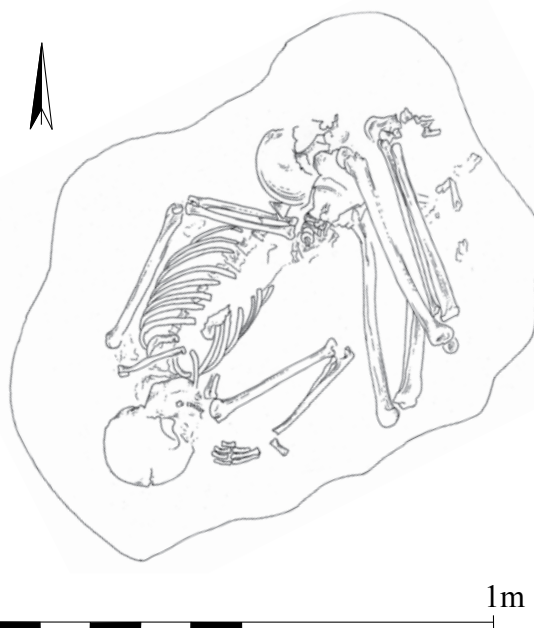


Figure 6. Site 3-J-28. Grave 6, skeleton 6 (scale 1:15).



Plate 3. Site 3-J-28. bone rings *in situ* on the fingers of the left hand.

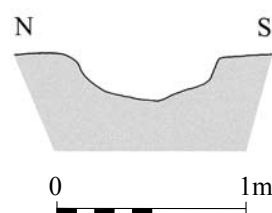


Figure 7. Site 3-J-28. Pit 9, north-south section (scale 1:40).

stones were found two carnelian beads (SF:275) and a fragment of a bone ring (SF:276).

### *The finds*

#### **SF:**

beads, glazed composition 329, stone - chalcedony 275,327,328

hair slide, shell 326,330

rings, bone 323-325, ivory? 276

#### **Pottery forms:**





Plate 4. Site 3-J-28. Tumuli (1) and (2) looking over the medieval cemetery at 3-J-23 towards the Nile.



Plate 4. Site 3-J-28. Pit (1)9 looking towards the grave (1)4.

### Site 3-J-29

The three prominent tumuli were excavated.

Grave (1)6 [skeleton (1)2, Grave cut L: 3.35m, W: 2.73m, Depth: 550mm. Monument - D: 4.8m, H: a little under 1m]

The grave cut was oval, the steeply-sloping sides meet the flat base with a marked change of angle (Figure 8). It is cut into the bedrock which here is a chalky matrix. The body was prone, oriented north-south with the head to the south turned to the east (Figure 9, Plate 6). The arms are flexed at the elbows, the right hand was at the level of the head, the left hand being at the level of the pelvis. The legs were widely splayed. Fragments of leather were found in the area of the pelvis. The earth fill, containing many small stone fragments, was sealed by a compact layer, almost a pavement, of carefully placed large rounded stones which had partly slumped into the fill towards the centre of the grave.

The tumulus was constructed of basalt and granite blocks up to 400mm in size. It had been considerably disturbed. A small robber pit was dug in the centre but this did not penetrate down to the level of the burial. It had filled naturally with layer of silt and was covered by gravel.

Grave (3)11 [skeleton (3)10, Grave cut L: 1.9m, W: 1.25m, Depth: 250mm. Monument - L: 4.6m, W: 4m, H: 690mm]

The grave cut is shallow and irregular following the natural fissures in the bedrock (Figure 12). The very poorly preserved skeleton is aligned north east – south west on its right side with the head to the north east facing north west (Figure 10). The left arm is extended with the hand by the pelvis, the position of the right arm is unclear. The legs are tightly flexed at the knees. The reddish-brown fine earth fill contains many angular and sub-angular basalt fragments up to 60mm in size.

The oval-shaped tumulus (Plate 7) was constructed of basalt blocks up to 800mm in size in a silt matrix visible in the small hole in the top of the monument.

Grave (4)17 [skeleton (4)16, Grave cut L: 2.75m, W: 2.35m, Depth: 710mm. Monument - L: 3.7m, W: 3.2m, H: 900mm]



Plate 6. Site 3-J-29. Grave (1)6 with skeleton (1)2, looking south.

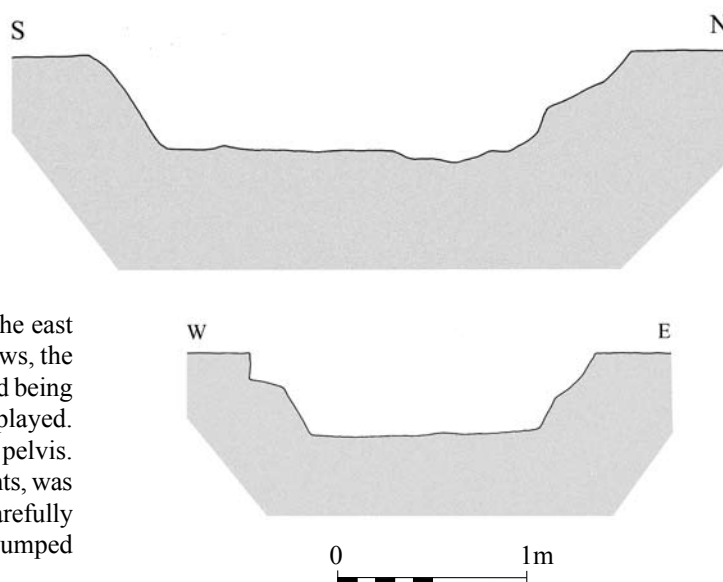


Figure 8. Site 3-J-29. Grave (1)6, north-south and east-west sections (scale 1:40).

The grave pit is irregular, roughly oval in shape with a triangular extension to the south east. It is cut down through the fragmented bedrock amongst outcrops of which the body lies. The skeleton is aligned south east-north west with the head to the south east tilted down and turned a little to the west (Figure 11, Plate 8). The upper part of the body is supine, the legs which are flexed at the knee, lie on their left side. The arms are flexed at the elbows and the hands rest over the belly. There are fragments of red leather below the right arm, over the left side of the pelvis and femoral head and above the right tibia. There was a shell and stone bracelet around the left wrist (SF:348) and a necklace at the neck (SF:349). Beads were recovered from throughout the fine fill which also contained many angular pieces of basalt up to 60mm in size.

The oval monument (Plate 9) was a pile of large basalt blocks up to 400mm in size without any silt in the interstices.

### *The finds*

#### **SF:**

Grave (3)11

disc, ceramic 931

Grave (4)17

beads, glazed composition 280; shell 278,279,348,349; ostrich eggshell 281,282;

stone - chalcedony 283

pendant, graphite 277

Also two conjoining unworked fragments of horn SF:5036

#### **Pottery forms:**



Figure 9. Site 3-J-29. Grave (1)6, skeleton (1)2 (scale 1:15).

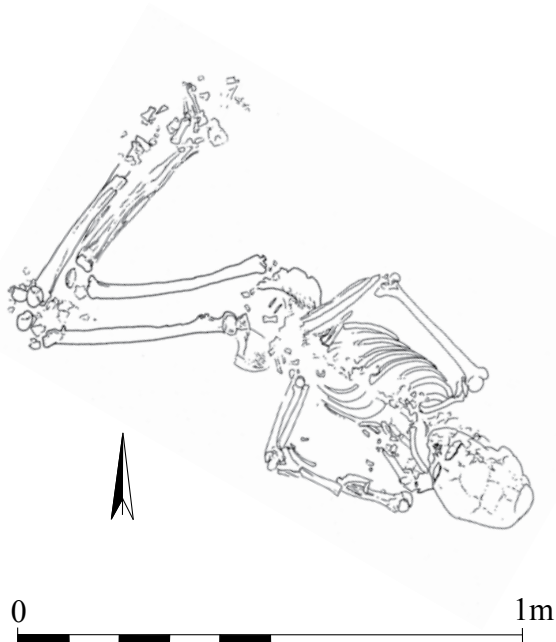


Figure 11. Site 3-J-29. Grave (4)17, skeleton (4)16 (scale 1:15).

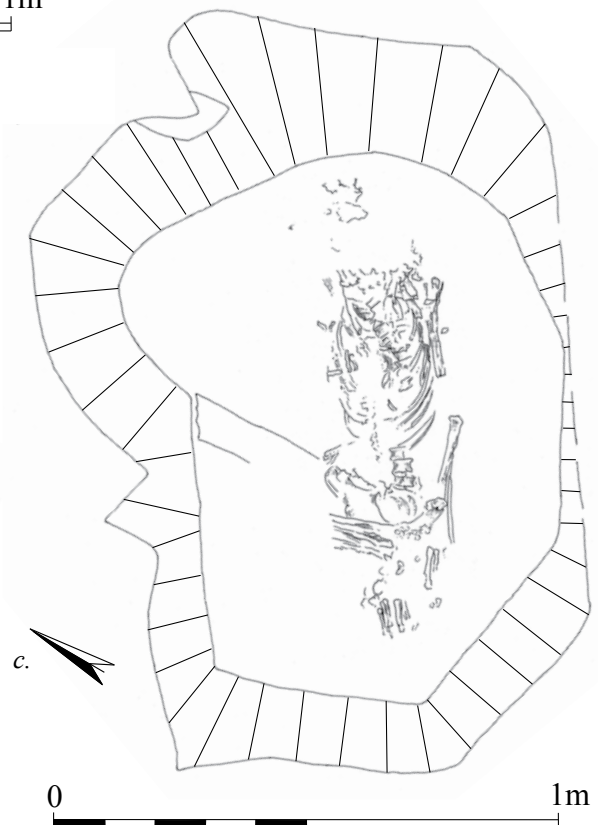


Figure 10. Site 3-J-29. Grave (3)11, skeleton (3)10 (scale 1:15).



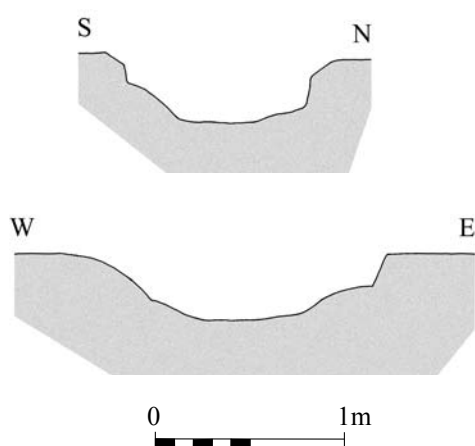


Figure 12. Site 3-J-29. Grave (3)11, north-south and east-west sections (scale 1:40).

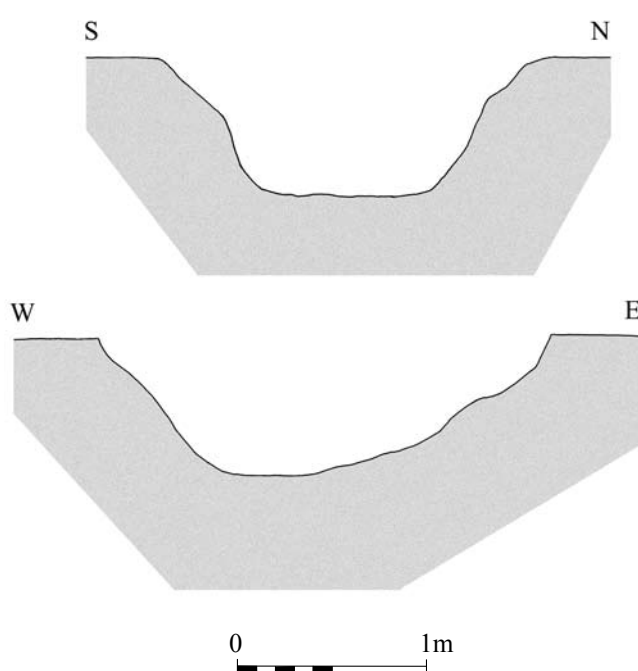


Figure 13. Site 3-J-29. Grave (4)17, north-south and east-west sections (scale 1:40).



Plate 7. Site 3-J-29. Tumulus (3), ½ section.



Plate 9. Site 3-J-29. Tumulus (4), ½ section.



Plate 8. Site 3-J-29. Grave (4)17, skeleton (4)16.